

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, June 1, 2015

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:33 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. The pledge of allegiance to the flag preceded roll call. Present: Councilors Remillard, Otis, Gentili, Higbee, Rozek, Nelson and Theberge. Councilor Morgan Allain and City Manager Wheeler were absent. Also present: Pam Laflamme, Susan Tremblay and Barbara Tetreault.

Minutes, Previous Meeting

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to accept the minutes of the May 18 Regular Meeting/Work Session, May 27 Budget Public Hearing. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements: Disbursement Summary Draft #1741 start date 5/19/2015 end date 6/1/2015 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,491,629.82. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Nelson to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Colleen Poulin, 108 Enman Hill Road, read a letter to Council requesting the reinstatement of money for a bicycle/skateboard park into the budget. She was very disappointed when she found out that the money earmarked for the park was removed. Ms Poulin then passed around photo of the current bicycle/skateboard park in Bethel, Maine that the kids really like. Bethel's park is in a great location and is free for everyone to use. Berlin's initial skate park plan was supposed to be near the Police Department which would be visible by the Police to help deter vandalism. This park could be unique to Berlin and could be used by many who will come here and spend money.

Christie Langlois, 596 Fourth Avenue, came with her son to support the skate park initiative. She would like to know where the City is with the project and where we are with the money that was earmarked for a skate park. She is concerned about what is out there. We need activities for kids, and it is a proven fact that biking has a positive effect on kids. There are many other kids and families who support the park but they are not here tonight. They have a whole rotation of parents who bring their kids to the park in Bethel. They all spend their money in Bethel when they go out to eat and spend money in stores. She would rather spend here than out-of-state. Last year there was a dedication of funds and now they are gone. The money could be broken up over a couple of fiscal budgets. She asked for a commitment from Council and would like to hear feedback on where this stands.

Tom Estabrooks, 18 Hutchins Street, came to Council last year with his idea was for a dirt bike park built using volunteers. In order to build the bike park, they would need a donation to use heavy equipment to make the project faster. No taxpayer money would be needed to be spent since they have willing people and strong kids with energy to burn to do the work. It is not quite the same as a skateboard park but it is doable. He still wants to do this so he asked Council to keep him in mind and when they are ready to do something to contact him.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports – No Reports.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Resolution 2015-15 amending the 2015 budget by revising Fund 10 School Department Federal Programs and appropriating \$43,266.02 of additional grant funds to the School Department to reflect the changes. (1st read)
Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to table the resolution and schedule a public hearing on June 15. So moved, the motion carried.

3. Resolution 2015-16 adopting a budget and appropriating money to defray the expenses of Berlin's City Government for the fiscal year 2016. (1st read)

Councilor Nelson moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to table the resolution and schedule a public hearing on June 15. So moved, the motion carried.

4. Resolution 2015-17 amending the 2015 budget by revising the Recreation Department budget and appropriating \$3,079.52 of donated funds as indicated. (1st read)

Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to table the resolution and schedule a public hearing on June 15. So moved, the motion carried.

4.a School Department BESS Tentative Agreement

Cost for proposed two year contract with the 67 Berlin Educational Support Staff (BESS)

	<u>Wages</u>	<u>FICA</u>	<u>NHRS</u>	<u>Total</u>
FY'15 Current:	\$1,360,145	\$104,051	\$26,315	
FY'16 Proposed:	<u>1,364,113</u>	<u>104,316</u>	<u>27,463</u>	
FY'16 Increase:	3,967	265	1,148	\$ 5,380
FY'17 Proposed:	\$1,391,395	\$106,402	28,012	
FY'17 Increase:	27,282	2,086	549	<u>\$29,918</u>
Total 2 year cost:				\$35,298

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to accept the BESS School Department cost items as presented. Roll call resulted in unanimous negative votes of Council including Mayor Grenier who declared the cost items rejected.

5. City Manager's Report - No Report due to City Manager's absence.

6. Mayor's Report – BIDPA Appointment:

The Mayor nominated Andre Caron for a three year term set to expire July 2018. Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to accept the Mayor's nomination of Andre Caron on the BIDPA Board. So moved, the motion carried.

Mayor Grenier addressed the audience about the proposed skateboard park. Two years ago the City was approached by PSNH to negotiate to buy land at Community Field. PSNH agreed to pay \$400,000 which would be enough for new bathrooms and initially for the storage shed. The City decided to build a brand new facility at Gilbert Street and remove Recreation from the building they share with the Police Department. Now, all equipment will be stored in the new building. Only the gym will be used by Recreation since the Police Department desperately needed more storage space. The work cost estimates were higher than anticipated. There was only \$50,000 set aside for the skate park for this year. That amount was an early casualty in the City budget due to lack of funds. Two years ago, the skate park was to be located at Hutchins Street Park but no engineering was done to see what to do to make it a nice park. The Mayor is not opposed to put money back in the budget to begin a commitment but that amount will not be \$30,000 or \$50,000. He does not want to do it if they don't do it right. He is not making excuses but a skateboard park is not on the list of high priorities right now. He suggested to Ms. Poulin that the people interested in a skate park could raise money and for every dollar they earn, the Council will match them with \$2.00. He would welcome some kind of architectural design or another place where it would be more appropriate. The Mayor concluded that Council will work with and will help them but the request for \$50,000 with no plans doesn't help our taxpayers.

Christy Langlois confirmed that they will come back to Council with a design. To that the Mayor replied there is no commitment louder than a dollar sign. He can't promise to fund the park but will give enough to make a match toward the project. If they could raise ten to fifteen thousand dollars it would help but it may not happen this summer.

Ms. Poulin asked if Mr. Perreault is done with his PSNH money. The Mayor explained that the \$400,000 was earmarked for something else. There is not enough money to do the park. Council made the decision to remove the money from the budget and that amount was \$50,000 not the \$80,000 as stated by Ms. Poulin.

Tom Estabrooks, Hutchins Street said while driving by the new Gilbert Street building he noticed a 40x40 track of land that could be used to make a bike park. Kids in Berlin ride bikes and his project only requires a BobCat or a skidder and a local company might let us use the equipment for a weekend to rough it in. Even that is not necessary since they could use a tiller to stay entertained and we can do that this summer. Mr. Estabrooks added that since this Town is so big on hockey, you could get a better skater building muscles from riding bikes. Maybe we could get the hockey team to volunteer. He has an actual plan and can give Council a detailed drawing but he needs to know the size of the space to work with.

One concern Mayor Grenier had last fall when Mr. Estabrooks approached Council about his bike park was about liability. Is the City liable if a kid cracks their skull in the bike park? Mayor Grenier wanted to clarify whether Mr. Estabrooks and Ms. Poulin were talking about the same thing or if they each had their own agenda because the City certainly can't do two parks. Ms. Poulin clarified that she is trying to combine support for something that might be more doable in the near future and it could be something the kids can get in and build themselves. They will think about fundraising to get things started.

Councilor Higbee volunteered to talk to Colleen and Tom to work on something concrete so they can begin to discuss options.

7. Public Comments – No comments
8. Council Comments - No comments
9. Adjournment: There being no further business before the Mayor and Council, Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Theberge to adjourn the regular meeting. So moved, the motion carried and Mayor Grenier declared the regular meeting closed at approximately 8:09 p.m.

A True Record, Attest:
Debra A. Patrick, CMC
City Clerk